Improvement of tea industry

*229. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any industrial policy for industrialization of the North-Eastern Region; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government propose to set up an Expert Committee to probe into the causes of deterioration of the tea industry in the country;

(c) whether Government also propose to invite suggestions from non-official experienced persons to improve the tea industry; and

(d) what is the total amount of subsidy given to the tea industry in Assam during 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) In order to promote industrialization in North Eastern Region, the Government had announced North East Industrial Policy on 24.12.1997 (NEIP, 1997) envisaging various concessions/benefits like Excise and Income Tax exemption, various subsidies, etc.

(b) No, Sir. However, Government has taken various initiatives including setting up of a Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) for the long-term development of the tea industry by improving the age profile of old tea bushes through replantation and rejuvenation pruning.

(c) Non-officials from various segments of the tea industry are represented in Tea Board. Their suggestions and expertise are taken into account for the development of the tea industry.

(d) During 2006-07, an amount of about Rs. 35 crore has been provided to the tea industry as subsidy in the State of Assam.

Drugs and extortion racket in Tihar jail

*230. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaint against Tihar jail officials for running drugs and extortion racket in the jail;